

NEBRASKA DHHS/DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES  
NEBRASKA HOMELESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: HMIS  
2011

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATION  
FOR  
NEBRASKA HOMELESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: HOMELESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION  
SYSTEM (PER NHAP DATA REQUIREMENTS OF THE EMERGENCY SHELTER GRANT AND  
HOMELESS SHELTER ASSISTANCE TRUST FUND)**

<u>01- Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program</u>	<u>Friday, January 21st, 2011, by 5:00 p.m. CST</u>
<b>RFA Number and Title</b>	<b>Date Due</b>

Monday, January 3rd, 2011  
**Date of Issuance**

<u>Monday, January 24th, 2011</u>	<u>Charles W. Coley</u>
<b>To Be Opened</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATION**

Sealed proposals, subject to the conditions included in the RFA, will be received until the above listed proposal due date. On Monday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the proposals will be publicly opened and read for furnishing the following described services to the State of Nebraska, Department of Health and Human Services, in accordance with the Request for Application and the specifications and conditions attached hereto.

If the application is missing technical information, the applicant will receive a telephone call followed by a written and/or electronic notification. The applicant will have until Friday, January 28th, 2011, by 5:00 p.m. CST to submit the needed information. **If applicant does not submit the requested additional information by January 28th, 2011 by 5:00 p.m. CST, the application will not be considered for funding.**

**INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANT – READ CAREFULLY**

**FAILURE TO FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS MAY RESULT IN REJECTED APPLICATION**

- All proposals are subject to the Standard Conditions and Terms of Contractual Services as specified in the RFA.
- Review application for completeness. **If applicant does not submit requested information by the deadline(s), the application will not be considered for funding.** (Use and include Application Completion Checklist.)
- Applications with narrative sections **exceeding the specified page limit, font-size and margins will not be considered for funding.**
- Faxed applications **will not be accepted**. Electronically submitted applications **will not be accepted**.
- The signed certification page **must be included with the proposal**.
- Applications **must be typewritten and manually signed to be valid.**
- **The principal contact person for all matters pertaining to the application is Charles Coley. Please contact Mr. Coley at charles.coley@nebraska.gov with any questions concerning the RFA or the application.**

SUBMIT APPLICATION TO:	Charles W. Coley, Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program Coordinator Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services Division of Children and Family Services P.O. Box 95026 Lincoln, NE 68509-5026 402-471-9200 charles.coley@nebraska.gov
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## **I. PROGRAM SUMMARY**

In order to serve the needs of people who are homeless and near homeless more effectively, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has combined the Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund (HSATF) and the Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) program application process into a single application. The combined process and application is referred to as the **Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program (NHAP)**.

In 1992 the Legislature created the Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund by the passage of LB 1192. The bill increased the transfer tax to the seller of real estate by twenty-five cents on each \$1,000 of value from \$1.50 to \$1.75. The revenue is collected by County Registers of Deeds, remitted to the Nebraska Revenue Department and deposited into the Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund. The level of remittance by individual counties is not relevant to the distribution process.

The Emergency Shelter Grant program is contained in subtitle B of title IV of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (Pub. L. 100-77, approved July 22, 1987). The program authorizes the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to make grants to States, units of local government, and nonprofit organizations providing assistance to homeless individuals.

In 2001, the Nebraska Legislature passed LB516, which transferred the Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. At that same time, Governor Johanns requested that HUD transfer the administration of the Emergency Shelter Grant to the Department of Health and Human Services. HUD granted this request, and on September 1, 2001, both the State Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund and the HUD Emergency Shelter Grant program became the responsibility of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

## **II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program (NHAP) is to provide an overall Continuum of Care approach to address the needs of people who are homeless in Nebraska by assisting in the alleviation of homelessness, providing temporary and/or permanent shelters for persons who are homeless, and encouraging the development of projects that link housing assistance programs with efforts to promote self-sufficiency.

Since the inception of the Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program (NHAP), subgrantees have been required to report the number of individuals and families who are homeless and near homeless assisted during a grant cycle. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was given a Congressional mandate to implement a Homeless Management Inventory System (HMIS) by October of 2004. The HMIS was to provide an unduplicated count of people who were homeless and near-homeless and served with federal McKinney-Vento homeless assistance funds.

As a response to the Congressional mandate, NHAP grantees met in 2002 to review potential systems for HMIS. The outcome was the formation of a 501 (c) 3 titled the Nebraska Management Information System (NMIS) Partnership. NMIS implemented a shared web-based information management system (ServicePoint by Bowman, Inc LLC.). ServicePoint allows authorized end-users at participating agencies to collect clients' personal information, demographic information, service and referral information and, with the client's permission, to disclose information for inclusion in a Basic Information Database.

Upon incorporation, NMIS received sole-source State funding via NHAP in the amount of \$100,000 annually for purpose of HMIS implementation and data collection. The goal of NMIS was to support a comprehensive system of care among participating agencies for the clients served via universal data sets

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and referral, eligibility assessment, tracking and case management. The collection and dissemination of aggregated data (void of any identifying client level information) was made available to participating agencies, policy makers, consumer representatives and advocates. The information was used to analyze and understand services and gaps in the delivery of services.

A history of NMIS is provided below:

<b>DATE</b>	<b>NMIS History</b>
1998	Lincoln/Lancaster County Community Services Management Information Services (CSMIS) researched various HMIS systems in order to be in compliance with HUD's upcoming October 2004 mandate to adopt an HMIS.
2001	The Panhandle Partnership for Health and Human Services (PPHHS) created a Community Access Program (CAP) and purchased and implemented the ServicePoint system to serve as an integrated management information system for health & human service organizations in the Panhandle. System became operational in July 2002.
2002	The seven state Continuums of Care held meetings to compare the MacLink and ServicePoint systems as choices for a statewide management information system.
2003	CSMIS joined the PPHHS system to implement an HMIS pilot project with five (5) agencies located in Lincoln. They later expanded to 11 agencies with 81 users.
2003	Community Action of Nebraska (CAN) with nine regional agencies was the third member to join the PPHHS project. The decision was made to form a separate 501 (c) (3) to administer the statewide system.
2005	The Omaha Continuum made the decision to drop the MacLink system and join the statewide ServicePoint system.
2005	The Nebraska Management Information System Partnership (NMIS) registered to become a 501 (c) (3). It held its first annual meeting in June.
2006	Beginning in January, the CSMIS, now renamed CSI (Community Services Information), was the first Continuum to submit Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program monthly reports via the ServicePoint system.
2007-2008	July 1, 2007-June 30, 2008 was the first NHAP grant cycle that subgrantees reported via ServicePoint. [Note: domestic violence (DV) agencies report on a similar but separate system due to a federal HMIS DV exemption.]
2008-2010	NMIS continued statewide implementation of HMIS/ServicePoint for all DHHS NHAP grantees to ensure universal homeless and near homeless data collection.

### **III. INTENT**

It is DHHS's intent to award funds through a regional and programmatic (i.e. activity specific) allocation process which emphasizes equitable distribution as well as quality projects and programs. The goal of this subgrant is to ensure continued HMIS/ServicePoint statewide implementation and data collection and evaluation in fulfillment of Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) and Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund (HSATF) guidelines.

**The overall set-aside NHAP funding amount for purpose of this RFA shall be \$100,000 for HMIS implementation via the statewide Continuum of Care (CoC) network.** For information regarding the statewide Continuum of Care regions, please visit [http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/fia/nhap/c\\_of\\_c.htm](http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/fia/nhap/c_of_c.htm).

Regional pro rata need (PRN) award amounts for statewide CoC regions relevant to this RFA shall equal the amounts enshrined within the current and effective NMIS/NHAP contract (*set to expire June 30, 2011*). The regional PRN amounts are therefore as follows:

- Balance of State (BOS) service region (*CoC Regions I-V*): **\$35,252**
- Lincoln Continuum of Care service region (*Lincoln Homeless Coalition*): **\$32,320**
- Omaha Continuum of Care service region (*Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless*): **\$32,427**

For purpose of this RFA, the funding source shall be the Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund (HSATF). Subgrantees selected for funding award via this RFA shall be certified as NHAP HMIS

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subgrantees for a period of four years. Annual funding renewal during that four year period shall be contingent upon achievement of specified objectives as outlined in the contracted “Scope of Services” section via the to-be-drafted NHAP Subgrant Award Agreement.

**IV. SERVICES DESCRIPTION**

The following services shall be performed by any subgrantee selected for funding award via this RFA:

- a. Continue development of an electronic reporting mechanism within HMIS/*ServicePoint* to procure subgrantee Emergency Shelter Grant (hereinafter “ESG”) data as required within HUD’s Integrated Disbursement and Information System (hereinafter “IDIS”). This Subgrantee reporting mandate shall be accomplished in addition to the NHAP Homeless and Near Homeless Reports that are submitted to NHAP per the reporting requirements and deadlines detailed in “c” below within this aforementioned section.
- b. Train end-users on the HMIS/*ServicePoint* system for subgrantee organizations and establish the required screens so that required data will be captured. This can be done directly or via other training options such as webinars to carry out the specific training. Area end-users are licensed individuals serving in professional capacities at grantee organizations that are funded by DHHS NHAP grant funding.
- c. Continue the statewide implementation of HMIS/*ServicePoint* that allows NHAP grantee organizations to enter required data. This data is reported to DHHS at the sixth month of the grant year (July 1, 2011-December 31, 2011) and for the full grant year. Year-end data (July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012) must be submitted to HUD by DHHS annually. The year-end report from the subgrantee to DHHS will therefore be due no later than August 1, 2012. The six-month report will be due to NHAP no later than January 31, 2012. In addition to the NHAP subgrantee organization agency-level reports, six month and year-end Continuum of Care service delivery region aggregate reports from the subgrantee will also be due by the above specified dates in the following formats: a single report representing Continuum of Care service delivery regions I-V (one through five); a report representing the Lincoln Continuum of Care service delivery region; and a report representing the Omaha Continuum of Care (Metro Area Continuum of Care) service delivery region.
- d. Participate in DHHS-specified committees of the governor-appointed Nebraska Commission on Housing and Homelessness (hereinafter “NCHH”). Specifically, the subgrantee will participate in meetings and DHHS-specified subcommittees of the Ad Hoc Committee on Ending Chronic Homelessness and the State Continuum of Care Committee.
- e. Participate in NHAP-sponsored quarterly conference calls for purpose of planning and technical assistance as appropriate.

**V. TARGET SERVICE AREAS**

In order to ensure HMIS/*ServicePoint* data collection and evaluation for statewide NHAP grantee organizations, DHHS will strongly consider the geographic distribution of funds according to the regions identified on the NHAP Continuum of Care map on page xi and according to the PRN regional amounts specified in “Section III: Intent” of this RFA.

**VI. TARGET POPULATION**

Relevant to NHAP grantee organizations mandated to enter data via HMIS/*ServicePoint*, NHAP funds may be used to assist homeless and near-homeless persons in Nebraska.

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Homeless means a person or family who lacks fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and who has a primary nighttime residence that is (1) a supervised publicly or privately-operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, youth hostels, domestic abuse shelters; and transitional programs for the mentally ill; or (2) an institution that provides a temporary residence for persons intended to be institutionalized; or (3) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

Near-homeless means a person or family residing in a fixed nighttime residence: (1) when the residence violates housing codes and/or ordinances (a) where the safety or health of the person or family is endangered; or (b) where the person or family is at risk of being evicted; or (2) where the number of individuals living in the home violates any existing housing ordinances regarding overcrowding for sixty days or less; or (3) whose health and/or safety is threatened by domestic violence; or (4) who is in a short-term treatment program.

Note that the definitions enshrined herein are subject to revision based upon HUD's impending Federal implementation of the HEARTH (*Homeless Emergency and Rapid Transition to Housing*) Act of 2009.

NHAP funding may not be used to serve wards of the State. This population is not considered homeless for the purpose of NHAP because the State is legally responsible for the basic needs of such children.

Runaway youth who are not a part of the foster care system and are not wards of the State are considered homeless.

## **VII. ELIGIBILITY**

### **Eligible Applicants:**

Funds will be granted to eligible community-based, neighborhood-based, and faith-based non-profit 501 (c) (3) organizations that address the purpose of the funding as outlined in the rules and regulations via this RFA.

### **Applicant Eligibility:**

To be eligible to apply for funding through the Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program, applicants must meet all of the following criteria:

- A. Applicant must be a private, nonprofit organization exempt from taxation under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended;
- B. Applicant cannot discriminate based on age, religion, sex, race, color, disability or national origin;
- C. Applicant must operate a certified drug-free premise.
- D. Applicant must conduct and submit the organization's annual, certified, external audit for the year immediately preceding the application to be eligible for NHAP funding. Applicants with audit findings or specified high-risk fiscal governance may be deemed ineligible for award via this RFA.

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## **VIII. FUNDING PRIORITIES**

### **Program Funding Priorities:**

High Priority will be given to programs that address any or all of the following:

1. **Extent of Homelessness:** The number of homeless consumers has been at the center of public policy debate for as long as homelessness has been acknowledged as a social problem. Due to inconsistent or minimal data collection, different estimation methods result in largely diverse numbers. One goal of HMIS is to estimate the true number of homeless and near homeless consumers. By collecting personal information on all clients served, NHAP hopes to generate an estimation of the unduplicated count of homeless and near homeless people that access services annually. Achievement of this goal depends upon the sustained objective of unduplicated homeless and near homeless data statewide.
2. **Nature of Homelessness:** HMIS data elements focus on the characteristics of those engaged in homeless services. Analyzing this information on a larger level will improve understanding of the consumers experiencing homelessness, the issues they face, and their service needs. High quality data on chronic homelessness, gender, date of birth, race, ethnicity, veteran's status, disability, and household composition are needed for this goal.
3. **Pattern of Homeless Service Utilization:** Homeless consumers often use more than one of the local programs available to help them access housing and link them with other services. Accurate program entry and exit dates and information on residence prior to program entry are critical in determining service use patterns that assess the average stay and movement among different homeless programs. The collection of accurate identifying information at each program is also necessary in order to identify the extent to which consumers appear in multiple programs, how consumers move through the system, and to detect cycles of homelessness.
4. **Effectiveness of the Homeless Services System:** Assessing the effectiveness of the current homeless services system is critical to finding successful solutions to ending homelessness. For this reason, information at program exit, such as destination and income, are important to determine how the service system has resolved consumers' housing crises and improved overall stability. Comparing program entry data with program exit data at the aggregate level will offer an accurate portrait of homeless program impacts on the consumers served.

## **IX. REVIEW AND EVALUATION PROCESS**

The Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program Application Review Team for purpose of this RFA will include the NHAP Coordinator and two volunteer representatives from the Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition (NDVSAC). Because domestic violence prevention service providers are federally exempt from HMIS data entry via the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization of 2005 (VAWA), NDVSAC personnel represent no conflict of interest in service as grants reviewers for point of this RFA. The grants review team will score the written proposals and will submit recommendations to the Department of Health and Human Services for final approval. Written proposals will be evaluated on the following factors, assigning a numerical weight with a maximum total of 100 points.

### **Criteria:**

20 points

#### **Section I. Organization, Programs, Services (3 PAGE MAXIMUM)**

History shows organization's development; mission(s) clearly states the focus of the organization's programs and services; adequacy of staffing, experience and competence of staff; demonstrated ability of project management, and eligibility.

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- 20 points      **Section II. Program Funding Request (3 PAGE MAXIMUM)**  
Specify why the program should be funded. Need may be documented by homeless service trends or other similar data within the Continuum region(s) in which funding is sought.
- 10 points      **Section III. Program Data (Use form and 2 PAGE MAXIMUM to provide responses to questions.)**  
Requested data for population(s) served, characteristics of populations served, and racial/ethnic characteristics within the Continuum region(s) in which funding is sought. Respond to questions regarding trends in persons served. Data is based upon current NHAP subgrantees for the reporting period of July 1, 2010-December 31, 2010.
- 15 points      **Section IV. Budget Information (2 PAGE MAXIMUM, for the BUDGET NARRATIVE)**  
Budget and audit reflect use of sound fiscal policy. The proposal needs to include the outlined budget completed on the forms provided. Please include a budget narrative showing how budget line items were determined (see instructions). Budget and audit show diversified budget funding sources. All Findings and Corrective Actions from all Federal and State funders are specified.
- 15 points      **Section V. Effectiveness Measures (3 PAGE MAXIMUM)**  
Describe successes and challenges of the program and how the agency builds on successes and addresses challenges. Discuss possible gaps and how gaps are determined. Substantiate with data. Address how any gaps are addressed.
- 10 points      **Section VI. Continuum of Care Involvement (2 PAGE MAXIMUM)**  
Evidence throughout the application of involvement in a Continuum of Care. Evidence that ongoing data collection and evaluation services are essential to the Regional/Local Continuum of Care. **Any letter(s) of support attached are not included in 2 page maximum.**
- 10 points      **Certifications** See Section X.

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**100 Points**

**X. CERTIFICATIONS: CONTINUUM OF CARE (10 Points)**

**Continuum of Care**

**The goal of homeless programs in the State of Nebraska is to provide services to people who are homeless and near homeless to help them reach self-sufficiency.** It is widely recognized that homelessness is not due to just a lack of shelter; it also involves a variety of unmet needs and underlying economic, physical, and social challenges. To the extent that homelessness encompasses a wide range of conditions, the State strongly supports the “Continuum of Care” concept as an effective approach to addressing the needs of people who are homeless. Continuum of Care is a community and regional-based process that provides a comprehensive and coordinated housing and service delivery system. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) initiated the “Continuum of Care” process in 1994. The process promotes a coordinated, strategic planning approach for programs that assist families and individuals who are homeless and near homeless.



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A Continuum of Care system has the goal of moving all persons who are homeless to permanent housing. This means identifying all homeless populations in communities, understanding the needs of people who are homeless and near homeless, and building a comprehensive system that responds. A Continuum of Care approach helps communities/regions strategically plan for and provide a balance of emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing and service resources to address the needs of people who are homeless so they can make the critical transition from homelessness to employment, independent living, and/or permanent supportive housing.

**A Regional/Local Continuum of Care definition:**

Recognition by the region/community of the importance of all the components of a Continuum of Care, and common definitions, (e.g., prevention, outreach, intake and assessment; emergency shelter; transitional housing programs, supportive housing; and permanent housing; and all appropriate support services) adopted to describe services and activities.

**XI. AWARDS AND AWARD NOTIFICATION**

**Award of funds is contingent on continued State funding.** Public notification of awards will be made in March of 2011. Prior to public notification, applicants are notified of pending awards. The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services begins discussion with each prospective grantee about programmatic and fiscal terms of the application in order to reach agreement on final terms. These discussions are limited to budget revisions or clarification on specific application sections. The discussions do not significantly alter the proposal. Subgrantees selected for funding award via this RFA shall be certified as NHAP HMIS subgrantees for a period of four years. Annual funding renewal during that four year period shall be contingent upon achievement of specified objectives as outlined in the contracted “Scope of Services” section via the to-be-drafted NHAP Subgrant Award Agreement.

In the event the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services fails to reach agreement with the applicant within thirty (30) days from commencement of negotiations, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services may disqualify any such applicant and proceed to award the contract to the next qualified applicant.

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request, to negotiate with all qualified sources, or to cancel in part or in its entirety this Request for Application. This Request for Application does not commit the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to award a contract, to pay costs incurred for the preparation of proposals, or to procure or contract for services.

All questions regarding this RFA and the application referenced herein must be submitted in writing to Charles Coley at [charles.coley@nebraska.gov](mailto:charles.coley@nebraska.gov).

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**Application Completion Checklist**

To ensure that your application for Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program is complete and will be accepted for review, **please use and include this checklist as the first page of your application:**

- ☐ The application **DOES NOT EXCEED THE PAGE MAXIMUMS INDICATED FOR NARRATIVE SECTIONS within the document.**
- ☐ The attached NHAP application is presented on the forms provided or in similar format on the applicant's own application document. All questions are addressed.
- ☐ Budget(s) identify all sources and uses of funds as they relate to the program(s) described in this application.

**THE FOLLOWING ITEMS MUST BE INCLUDED:**

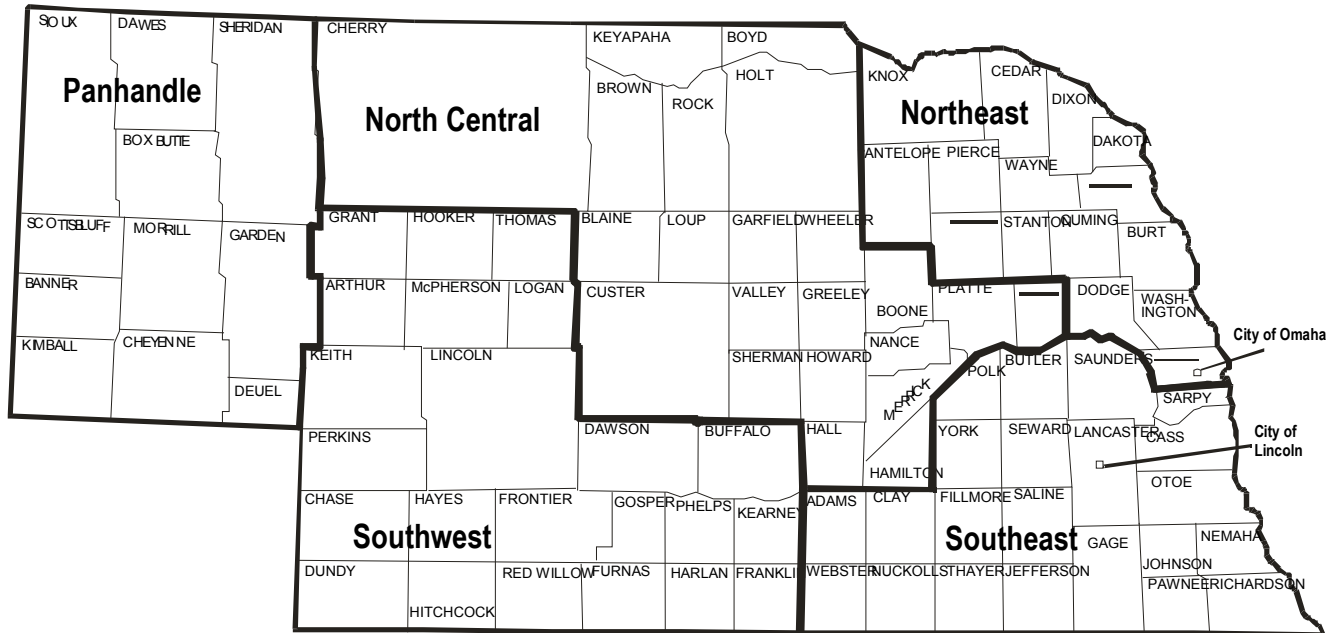
- ☐ Copy of a certified, external financial audit for the year preceding application.
- ☐ Organization's articles of incorporation and/or proof of 501 (c) (3) status **(Include even if your organization has received NHAP funding in the past.)**
- ☐ List of Board of Director's, including their addresses and phone numbers.
- ☐ List of personnel supported through this grant.
- ☐ Letters of support (not to exceed six).
- ☐ Certification of Continuum of Care participation and Drug Free Work Place Statement.

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- ☐ Please submit **original and (2) copies** of the **entire application and supporting documentation.**

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**Continuum of Care Regions**

# Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program



## Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program (NHAP) Continuum of Care Regions

- Region 1: Panhandle** (Sioux, Dawes, Sheridan, Box Butte, Scotts Bluff, Morrill, Garden, Banner, Kimball, Cheyenne, Deuel counties)
- Region 2: North Central** (Cherry, Keya Paha, Boyd, Brown, Rock, Holt, Blaine, Loup, Garfield, Wheeler, Boone, Platte, Colfax, Custer, Valley, Greeley, Sherman, Howard, Nance, Hall, Merrick, Hamilton counties)
- Region 3: Southwest** (Grant, Hooker, Thomas, Arthur, McPherson, Logan, Keith, Lincoln, Perkins, Dawson, Buffalo, Chase, Hayes, Frontier, Gosper, Phelps, Kearney, Dundy, Hitchcock, Redwillow, Furnas, Harlan, Franklin counties)
- Region 4: Southeast** (Polk, Butler, Saunders, Sarpy, York, Seward, Lancaster [Lincoln excluded], Cass, Otoe, Fillmore, Saline, Adams, Clay, Webster, Nuckolls, Thayer, Jefferson, Gage, Johnson, Nemaha, Pawnee, Richardson counties)
- Region 5: Northeast** (Knox, Cedar, Dixon, Dakota, Antelope, Pierce, Wayne, Thurston, Madison, Stanton, Cuming, Burt, Dodge, Washington, Douglas counties [Omaha excluded])
- Region 6: Lincoln**
- Region 7: Omaha** and the greater region served by the Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless (MACCH)